Journalists Welfare Fund

3567. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the details of beneficiaries under the Journalists Welfare Fund since its establishment in 2001;

(b) the amount in the fund as on 31st March, 2002;

(c) whether there are any guidelines for release of *ex-gratia*; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Beneficiaries under the Journalists Welfare Fund since its establishment in 2001 are as under:

(i) Late Yogesh B. Mathur, Correspondent, Press Trust of India (PTI) (Bhasha).

(ii) Late Ranjan Jha, Correspondent, TV Today (Aaj Tak).

(iii) Late Gopal Singh Bisht, Cameraman, TV Today (Aaj Tak),

(iv) Late Sanjiv Sinha, Correspondent, Indian Express.

(v) Late Ms. Anju Sharma, Correspondent, Hindustan Times.

(vi) Shri Vikram Singh Bisht, Technician, Asian News International (ANI).

(b) The Journalists Welfare Fund had a balance of Rs. 495 lakhs as on 31st March, 2002.

(c) and (d) Guidelines for constitution and administration of Journalists Welfare Fund are given in the Statement.

Statement

Scheme for Constitution and Administration of the Journalists Welfare Fund

TITLE OF THE SECHEME	The Scheme may be called the Journalists Welfare Fund.
PERIOD OF OPERATION	It shall come into force with effect from the financial year 2001-2002 and shall be operative in the subsequent years.

PURPOSE OF THE FUND	To provide one time *ex-gratia* relief on urgent basis to:— (i) members of the family of the journalists who suffer loss of life, or (ii) journalists who suffer permanent disability, rendering them incapable of discharging their duties. due to unnatural causes and in the course of their duty, (iii) Cases of extreme hardship on account of untimely death of the sole bread-earner who is a journalist may also be considered for assistance from the Fund.
CONSTITUTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND	The Fund will be constituted under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and will be administered by a Committee comprising:— Patron(s) Minister/Minister of State of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Secretary (I&B) — Chairperson AS&FA — Member PIO — Member JS(P) — Member Dy. Secretary/ Director — Member Secretary, Ministry of I&B handling Press matters.
CORPUS OF THE FUND	The Fund will be set up with the receipts of: (i) Need based Grant made by the Government of India. (ii) Any amount received from donations for the purpose.

	The amounts available in the fund would be kept in the section 'Reserve Funds bearing interest' in the public Account of India.
INCOME TO THE FUND	Interest at the rate of 9 per cent per annum shall be allowed on the balances available in the fund at the end of the year.
PAYMENTS FROM THE FUND	The payment should be restricted to the interest earnings only. The actual principal should not be allowed to be eroded.
ELIGIBILITY FOR AVAILING ASSISTANCE FROM THE FUND	A journalist as defined below shall be eligible for relief from the Fund, provided that—
	(a) He/she is a citizen of India.
	(b) He/she is ordinarily resident of India, and
	(c) He/she should be accredited to PIB at the Headquarters of the Govt. of India or at the Headquarters (Capitals) of the State Governments.
	A Journalists for the purpose of this scheme would mean to be a Working Journalist as defined udner the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955 and who is performing field duty.
PROCEDURE FOR SANCTION FROM THE FUND	Proposals for assistance from the Fund will be intiated by the PIO with specific recommendation and supporting documents.
	The recommendation will be considered and decided by the Committee. However, in cases of urgency, the decision may be taken with the approval of the Chairman of the Committee and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE UNDER THE FUND	One time *ex-gratia* relief of an amount of Rs. 1.00 lakh may be provided to the victim of permanent disability or dependents of the deceased.
ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT	The Committee shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual Statement of accounts. The Fund shall be non-lapsable in nature as the accounts are closed to balance.
	The Fund shall be subject to internal audit of Chief Controller of Accounts, M/o I&B and statutory audit of Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
RELATIONSHIP OF THE FUND WITH GENERAL REVENUES	The periodic contributions to the Fund shall be kept within the Government Account in the section "Reserve Fund bearing interest" in the Public Account of India. The fund would be classified under the Major Head '8121-General and Other Reserve Funds'.
GENERAL	Grant of financial assistance from the Fund to any working journalist is not a matter of right. Assistance would be extended depending on the Commitee's satisfaction regarding the eligibility/ merits of the cases and the financial resources available for the purpose. The Committee reserves the right to reject or accept any application without assigning any reasons therefor.

Establishment of National Press Centre

3568. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that setting up of National Press Centre is hanging fire since the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in not taking up the project; and